

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended): Method of thawing pieces of ice which contain protein-containing products and water, which comprises introducing the pieces of ice into a horizontal mixer, **said horizontal mixer comprising at least one stirrer whose axis of rotation is arranged horizontally**, heating the **horizontal** mixer and at the same time mixing the contents of the mixer to maintain the temperature of the contents of the mixer at a temperature which is less than 10°C above the melting point of the ice, whereby the pieces of ice are melted to form a liquid phase and during such melting, any floating pieces of ice are continually submerged in the liquefied phase and mixed with it.
2. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein said horizontal mixer is a disc mixer or ploughshare mixer.
3. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein said horizontal mixer has mixing elements which have internal heating.
4. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein said horizontal mixer has wiping elements traveling around the wall thereof.
5. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein said protein-containing products are protein-containing products from natural biological sources or from a biological process.
6. (Canceled):
7. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein the horizontal mixer is operated continuously.
8. (Canceled):
9. (Previously Presented): The Method according to Claim 1, wherein said temperature is maintained at less than 5°C above the melting point of the ice.